



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

REF SP 13- Honorary Consul License Plate Application

April 26, 2021

Mr. Brad Simpson, Director
Division of Motor Vehicles
State Tax Commission
210 North 1950 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84134

Dear Mr. Simpson:

The Department of State understands some states administratively issue a vanity license plate to honorary consular officers upon presentation of a valid Department-issued identification card at the time of vehicle registration. The Department is aware a small revenue may be collected from the issuance of these license plates, however; the consequences outweigh the benefit of issuance. The Department requests the discontinuation of this practice in effort to protect all states from any negative attention related to fraud and/or abuse.

In just one example, multiple Federal law enforcement agencies, local police department, and the Department's Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) are currently pursuing action against a former honorary consular officer, who allegedly defrauded law enforcement officials. This individual lawfully obtained a vanity license plate, but later his assignment was terminated by the sending government. Regardless, he kept the vanity license plate to better misrepresent himself and support his fraudulent schemes.

Such state-issued vanity license plates present an opportunity to exploit the U.S. public by falsely supporting the appearance of immunity, when in fact, an honorary consular officer's vehicle is not afforded any immunity by the United States. Despite continued outreach, U.S. law enforcement partners are not always accurately informed, and thus may incorrectly treat such individuals differently than any other U.S. citizen or lawful permanent residents.

To avoid such incidents and backlash the Department requests the cessation of vanity license plate issuance and renewal. In the interim and in extenuating circumstances, the Department and other U.S. government agencies may need to request cancellation of a specific license plate. Thus, OFM would like work with you to outline a method in which to communicate such requests.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at FrankeGM@State.gov or (310) 235-6292.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Franke

Gretchen Franke

Regional Director

Office of Foreign Missions – Los Angeles